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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E MBEYZEROV AND AF/PDPA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SADC](#) [MA](#)
SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR: VITUPERATIVE ANTI-SADC RHETORIC FOLLOWS UNGA
DEBACLE

SUMMARY

¶1. (U) The Malagasy transition government (HAT) and its allies are clearly frustrated by the successful efforts of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to block the scheduled speech of HAT President Andry Rajoelina at the United Nations General Assembly last week. On Monday September 28, Pro-HAT newspapers published vitriolic and overtly racist articles concerning SADC's motivation for blocking Rajoelina from speaking. Meanwhile, on September 30, the HAT Prime Minister, Monja Roindefo, issued a press release on behalf of his cabinet condemning SADC's actions - see complete text Para 3. Finally, HAT political allies threatened to withhold visas to International Contact Group (ICG) mediators led by SADC representative former Mozambican President Joachim Chissano for the October 6 ICG meeting scheduled in Antananarivo. For an unconstitutional government yearning for legitimacy and international recognition, Rajoelina's failed attempt to speak to the General Assembly has clearly caused panic amongst his backers - but Roindefo's actions are also intended to save his own seat in the faltering government. End Summary.

PRO-HAT PRESS ACCUSE SADC OF RACISM?

¶2. (U) The Malagasy transition government (HAT) and its media allies have long been frustrated in their efforts to establish legitimacy and recognition in the eyes of the international community. Following last week's successful efforts to block Rajoelina from speaking at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) these allies have now lashed out in the press. Daily newspaper, La Verite (The Truth), the mouthpiece of the HAT, published the most vitriolic response on September 28, accusing the member countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) of "unhealthy and Machiavellian maneuvers by 'niggers' whose evil vies with stupidity." Meanwhile, pro-HAT La Gazette qualified SADC countries as "horrible, detestable and even racist." Radio commentators from Rajoelina's VIVA Radio, criticized SADC countries as "savage and uncultured."

PRIME MINISTER ROINDEFO CONDEMNS SADC

¶3. (U) On September 30, the office of transition government's (HAT) Prime Minister Monja Roindefo issued a press release condemning the Southern African Development Community and its member countries for blocking HAT President Andry Rajoelina from speaking at last week's United Nations General Assembly - text below. The press release was carried by the majority of Malagasy dailies.

Begin text:

Pursuant to the Cabinet Meeting of Tuesday, September 29, 2009, we, the National Union Government, led by Prime Minister Monja Roindefo

Zafitsimivalo, have reached the following unanimous resolutions:

We strongly condemn the irregular and scandalous procedure that prevented the Malagasy Nation from enjoying its legitimate right to express itself through its President of the High Authority of the Transition, H. E. Mr. Andry Nirina Rajoelina, at the official stand during the 64th United Nations General Assembly.

We condemn the seditious agreement of SADC countries which prompted this humiliation.

We request official apologies from SADC member countries for their offense to our national sovereignty. Failing that, the Government of Madagascar shall take the appropriate measures regarding its SADC membership.

We reiterate that the government's priority remains that of holding elections as soon as possible.

Antananarivo, September 29, 2009.

On behalf of the Government,
The Prime Minister, Head of the Government
//signature//

MONJA Roindefo Zafitsimivalo (End text.)

HAT THREATENS TO BLOCK ENTRY OF CONTACT GROUP

14. (U) Still reeling from international embarrassment at the United Nations, the HAT indicated that it might refuse visas and entry to Madagascar of officials from SADC countries. According to Reuters,

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Prime Minister Roindefo claimed to have sent letters to SADC Member states with missions in Madagascar and others who voted against TGV speaking (e.g. India) demanding an explanation. Roindefo was quoted as saying that "further actions will depend on the response we receive to our demands for an explanation." International Contact Group (ICG) mediators, led by SADC representative and former Mozambican President Joachim Chissano are expected in Madagascar in the coming days for the ICG meeting on October 6.

RAJOELINA SILENT

15. (U) Throughout all of this, HAT President Rajoelina has made no public comment since his rejection in New York. He is officially expected to return to Madagascar September 30 after meetings in Paris.

COMMENT

16. (SBU) From the time he took power in March, Rajoelina has craved recognition and legitimacy from the international community. Last week's UNGA fiasco has proved to be a major setback for him and his transitional government. Prior to his departure for UNGA, the HAT and Rajoelina had been touting his trip as the international community's "recognition" of the HAT. Two of Rajoelina's most ardent media cronies traveled with him to New York, reporting back daily of how warmly he was being received by other delegations and by New Yorkers. It comes as no surprise that they would now turn up the heat on SADC and dissuade the Malagasy people from supporting the Maputo process. Additionally, by defending TGV as ardently as he is, Roindefo is also making it much harder and more awkward for the President to dismiss him when he returns, as required under Maputo.

Marquardt